4: Garnett B-4, 5 (ca. 1880) 1891
EG1 Albania EG1

unpardonable indignities, and over her dead body the brother and sister swore to utterly exterminate her enemies.

Some years later Shainitza was grieving for the death of her favourite son, Aden Bey. So wild was her sorrow that she smashed with a hammer all his and her own diamond ornaments, burnt all her cashmeres and valuable furs, and forced his young widow to lie on straw mats spread on the ground instead of on a bed. The mirrors and ornaments of her serail were also destroyed, its windows were by her order painted black,[1] and everything which in any way recalled joy or happiness was banished from the palace. Roused from this abandonment of grief by the news of the fall of Gardiki,[2] she wrote to Ali reminding him of the oath they had sworn together over their mother's corpse, and of her wrongs and theirs, and urged him to have no mercy on the inhabitants of that town. "As for me," she added in conclusion, "it is only on cushions stuffed with the hair of the women of Gardiki that Shainitza will henceforward repose!"

Faithfully was the terrible oath, sworn to the dead, kept both by brother and sister. The chief men of Gardiki, to the number of some three hundred, induced by fair promises to meet Ali at the Khan of Valieré, were there ruthlessly massacred by the Christian troops under his Greek lieutenant, Thanasé

[1] See p. 265; and compare similar custom in folk-tale, p. 315.

[2] In 1802. A Greek folk-song graphically describes the gallant defence made by this town, which was taken by one of Ali's lieutenants, "Yousouf the Arab" (*Greek Folk-songs*, p. 234).

4: Garnett B-4, 5 (ca. 1880) 1891
EG1 Albania EG1

Vaghia,[1] not one escaping. Shainitza caused the town to be razed to the ground, and, after cutting off the hair of the women with every insult which she could heap upon them, this tigress in human form drove them forth with their children to the mountains, menacing any with a like doom who should venture to give food or shelter to the objects of her wrath. The traveller passing through the valley of Drynopolis may to this day see in the wall of the khan the tablet which records, in letters of gold, the number of the dead and the date of their sacrifice to the *manes* of the mother and the fury of the sister of the Vizier of Ioannina.

In a codicil to her will, Khamko directed that a *hadji*, or pilgrim, should be despatched on her part to lay offerings on the tomb of the Prophet, and pray there for the repose of her soul. Such pilgrimages and offerings may, however, only be made when the expenses are defrayed with money lawfully and honestly acquired. And as it was found on inquiry into the estate of the late Veli Bey, Ali's ancestor, that the property to be sold for this purpose had been taken by force or fraud from a Christian, the pilgrimage was disallowed by the religious authorities.

Such extreme ferocity of disposition as that manifested by Khamko and Shainitza is, however, exceptional among Albanian women, and even in Ali Pasha's

[1] The Greek poet, Aristotle Valaorites, has made Thanasé Vaghia the subject of one of his most striking poems, Ὁ βρυκόλακας, "The Vampire," a translation of which may be found in my *Greek Folk-songs*, p. 121. The tragedy of Ἡ κυρὰ φροσύνη, "The Lady Phrosyne," by the same writer, part of which I saw acted in an open-air theatre at Salonica, gives a vivid picture of Ali Pasha and his Court.

4: Garnett B-4, 5 (ca. 1880)-1891
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539

and lame. Clement, being young and active, and also attentive to his new duties, soon gained the affection of his master, and, at the same time, that of his daughter, who, seeing no chance of ever being asked in marriage by her equal, took it into her head to make the shepherd lad fall in love with her. Clement long resisted the allurements of the uncomely Bubce, and pointed out to her the danger they would both run should any understanding between them come to her father's ears, and also the misery that would follow for her a union with a penniless man. "It is not our danger, but my deformity that thou fearest," the shrewd Bubce would reply, and, her devotion finally touching the heart of Clement, the lovers met frequently in secret.

Finding herself compelled to take her stepmother into her confidence, the latter, fearing that her husband's pride would impel him to some act of violence were the state of affairs to come suddenly to his
[788] knowledge, tried to prepare him for the news, and made him swear by St. Nicholas not to do harm to any one. The angry father, in spite of his oath, at first threatened to kill both his daughter and her lover, and reproached them bitterly for the dishonour they had brought upon his house. Bubce, however, took all the blame upon herself, and her tears and prayers, joined to those of his wife, who reminded him of the oath he had sworn "by St. Nicholas," and which is of all oaths the most binding on an Albanian, finally prevailed with him. Clement might marry his daughter, but on condition that neither of them ever again should appear before him. So the couple

4: Garnett B-4, 5 (ca. 1880) 1891
EG1 Albania EG1

retired to the pasturage of Beston, which the shepherd gave to his daughter, taking with them the sheep which constituted Clement's wages. Here they settled down and prospered, leaving behind them great wealth in flocks, and a numerous family of descendants. At the present day the tribe of the Clementi number 500 families, or 5400 souls.

Social morality is pushed to its extremest limit by the Miridite mountaineers. Though their women enjoy the greatest freedom, an unmarried girl cannot, out of doors, speak to a man not a relative of her family without risking the loss of her reputation, a calamity which few would care to survive. M. Hecquard cites a case in point, related to him by an Albanian *abbé*, which well illustrates the value that an Albanian girl sets on her honour. A man happened to remark in joke to a girl, the sister of one of his friends, and before several other persons, that he had seen her in conversation with a young man, whose name he mentioned. On the following Easter Sunday, when all the tribe were congregated, the girl, who was under fifteen, on leaving the church after partaking, as is customary on that day, of the Eucharist, called God to witness to her innocence, and seizing a pistol from one of her relatives, shot herself through the heart. Two days afterwards, the man whose careless words had been the cause of the tragedy fell by the hand of the victim's brother.

Among the Albanians exogamy is the general rule, which is carried out by the Miridite chieftains to the extent of carrying off by force a woman from one of the neighbouring Moslem tribes. The wives of the

4: Garnett B-4, 5 (ca. 1880) 1891
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585 if compelled to do so, in order to show how great is her regret at leaving the paternal roof.[1] In fact, her behaviour throughout is intended to typify her reluctance to exchange the single for the married state. Meantime the guests divert themselves with liqueurs, [262 463] coffee, and sweets, and the performances of the professional musicians hired for the occasion.

About ten o'clock a cart arrives from the bridegroom's abode to fetch the bride's baggage, which is [415 531] packed in a large wooden box ornamented with designs of flowers rudely executed. When it starts every one shouts, "*Per heir*" (Good luck!), and among the Christians, several women accompany the cart [788] outside the gate, sprinkling both it and its contents with holy water. A few minutes afterwards, all the male guests invited by the bridegroom's friends set out, preceded by his father, who leads a richly caparisoned horse on which the bride will ride home. As they leave the house the women sing:

[539]

Happy may thy journey be,
Eldest of our family.
Holy sign of cross now make,
To the right thy way then take.
If to us thou bring fair bride,
May the sugar-plums taste sweet,
If a foul one by thy side
That they bitter taste were meet.

585 Arrived at their destination, the party range them-
262 selves around the courtyard, where glasses of cognac and water, and sweets and sugar-plums of various kinds

[1] The Mongols of Tibet observe a similar custom. See *Journal of Sarat Chandra Das*, published by the Royal Geographical Society.

4: Garnett B-4, 5 (ca. 1880) 1891
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CHAPTER XI.

ALBANIAN WOMEN: THEIR FOLK-BELIEFS.

144 114 MR. STUART GLENNIE'S suggestion[1] that the Albanians are probably a mixed Pelasgo-Aryan race, and that the Pelasgians, whose Larissas extend from Italy and Greece through Asia Minor to Northern Syria and Chaldea, were related to the Archaian White Race, the founders of civilisation in the Euphrates Valley, gives special interest to all their folk-lore.

771 Survivals of ancient Nature-worship, which neither Christianity nor Islam has succeeded in eliminating, may be found in the form of the oaths still in use in the Albanian highlands. Contact with the outer world has taught the dwellers in towns to call upon the Virgin and Saints, or Allah and Mohammed, as witnesses to their word; but the oaths of the pastoral Skipetar are still "By sky and earth" (*Per kĭelh e per dhé*), "By mountain and plain" (*Per ket ziarm e per ket ŭi*), and "By sun and moon" (*Per ket dielh e per ket hân*). The curious ceremony of taking the "Oath of the Stone," which is said by Wassa Effendi[2] to have been a Pelasgian custom, is

788 [177]

[1] First made in Europe and Asia (1879), and more fully in papers on the Archaian White Races, read in 1887 at meetings of the Royal Historical Society and of the British Association.

[2] *Etudes sur l'Albanie et les Albanais.*

4: Garnett B-4, 5 (ca. 1880) 1891
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also made use of by the Albanian highlanders generally, when settling matters of importance. According to this writer, quoting from M. Ampère,[1] a similar custom also existed among the ancient Romans. Sylla, on leaving Rome to fight against Mithridates, required Cinna to swear, not by the national divinities, but on the Sacred Stone, and according to an ancient rite of the Etruscans, to make no innovations during his absence. Cinna, when pronouncing this oath, placed the stone on his shoulder, and then threw it backwards, while he pronounced, in a loud voice, the curses which should fall upon him were he false to his promise. The taking of this oath in Albania is attended with the same ceremonies. It is sworn by the elders of the *phars*, or clans, on the occasion of settling serious disputes, such as those concerning the boundaries of village lands, or other communal matters. The elders of the two tribes, Christian or Moslem, after taking the Oath of the Stone, assemble in council and settle the question at issue.

This oath, in another form, also enters into every-day speech. In course of conversation, when a Gheg wishes to emphasise what he is saying, he takes up in his hand, or points to, the nearest stone, saying, "By this weight" (*Per ket pésh*), and a Tosk makes use of the phrase, "By the heaviness of this stone" (*Per te rond te keti gúr*).[2]

The Supernals, with which the Albanian women terrify themselves and their children, appear to be, for the most part, like those of the Bulgarians,

[1] *Histoire des Romains à Rome.* [2] Wassa Effendi, *Op. cit.*

4: Garnett B-4, 5 (ca. 1880) 1891
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of these parti-coloured bracelets, with a tiny gold coin attached, was, on the 1st of March (Old Style), presented by the Roumanian Consul-General to each lady of his acquaintance, and I, for one, religiously wore my charm against the power of the March sun, which in the East generally is said to "blacken" the complexion, until the month was out. It was not, however, finally thrown to the swallows, but carried off by an English visitor as a curio.

On the 25th of this month the women go through the house beating on copper pans, in order to drive out any poisonous snakes that may have intended to take up their abode there. The two last days of March and the first of April are called *Plyáteté*, a word signifying "old," and referring to the past season, personified as "Old Mother Winter." If by the last-mentioned date Spring has not yet fully set in, the blame is laid at the door of the old women, who are evidently held to be in league with "Old Mother Winter."

On Easter Eve in some places, Selitza, for instance, the young men assemble with lighted torches, which they wave about as they walk in procession through the village. Arrived at the river, they throw them in, crying, "*Koré-ya* (O Maiden)! We throw thee into the water with these torches, so mayest thou never return!" the *Koré* evidently referring, as Von Hahn suggests,[1] to the malevolent supernals, Vilas, Dragonas, &c., before described. When the priest comes to bless the house on Easter Day, the women throw after him, as he leaves, hot embers from the

[1] *Albanesische Studien*, p. 160.

4: Garnett B-4, 5 (ca. 1880) 1891
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789 hearth, in order that he may take away with him all
788 danger from fire for the coming year.

St. John's Eve is observed in Albania with the
789 customary bonfire, to leap over which is considered so
372 salutary that even the old people venture to do so at least once. A curious ceremony, performed about this season, when the spring sowing is concluded, may also be here mentioned. Standing with his back to the plough, the farmer rubs part of the
[136] handle with earth in the belief that the wild swine will thus be prevented from damaging his crops.

789 On the day on which the new moon is first seen, all possible work is avoided, and no important task of any kind, such as ploughing, sowing, or harvesting, is commenced, for it would be sure to be unsuccessful. The girls and children look at the moon through a sieve, and rub their faces with a piece of silver, while they sing:

[539]

Young moon!
Young maid!
Health to me;
Ill to thee!
Head as soft as dough be thine!
Head as hard as stone be mine!

777 The 9th, 19th, and 29th days of every month are considered unlucky, as is also the Tuesday of every week, for setting out on a journey, or commencing any kind of work. Friday is also an inauspicious day
[241] for sowing, and Saturday for beginning to plough or dig.

4: Garnett B-4, 5 (ca. 1880) 1891
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The Liowta[1] *and the Beauty of the Earth.*[2]

There was once a Vlach[3] who was very rich and had a big sheep farm. A king once happened to be travelling that way, and stopped at his house, and the Vlach gave him the best of all he had. That same night the Vlach's wife gave birth to a son. The king made the father promise to have his son taught various languages, and gave him a cross, saying, "When thy son is fifteen years old, give him this cross and tell him to come to me in such and such a town." This said, he went away. 539

The Vlach did as the king had advised, and the boy learnt to speak several languages. On his fifteenth birthday, his father gave him the cross. He read the inscription it bore, which was, "I am the king, thy godfather; come to me in such and such a town." When he had read it, he said to his father:

"See what the king has written for me. I must go to him."

So the father gave him a companion.

On the way, the boy, being hungry, descended a ravine, at the bottom of which was a spring. When he had finished his meal, he saw his companion standing on the top of a rock with a great stone in his hand, and heard him say:

"Take off thy clothes, give them to me, and take mine; then swear that thou wilt reveal to no man what has passed between us." [788]

[1] This appears to me the most correct way of rendering phonetically the word *Λιουβτα*.

[2] Dozon, *Manuel Chkipe*, No. xvi., and *Contes Albanais*, No. xii.

[3] See vol. i. chap. i., "The Vlachs."

4: Garnett B-4, 5 (ca. 1880) 1891
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539 The boy pronounced this oath, "If I die and come
• 788 to life again, then only will I denounce thee."

When they had changed dresses, the companion mounted the horse, and they arrived at the king's palace. The latter, on seeing the cross, took the youth who presented it for his godson, and, giving him his hand, led him to his private apartment. As to the son of the Vlach, he remained in the basement, and spoke to each person there in his own language.

539 The companion pretended to be ill. The king went to see him, and asked him what he ailed.

"I feel very ill," he replied.

"What shall we do for you?"

"Get me one of the cabbages guarded by the Liouvía."

"So many kings, and so many more powerful than I, have gone to take one, and have never succeeded," replied the king.

"Command the youth who is downstairs to go. If he refuses, threaten him."

Then the king said to the boy, "Willy, nilly, thou must go to such and such a place, and bring back a cabbage" (the companion pretended to be ill because he knew that if the son of the Vlach went for the cabbage, he would never come back).

The boy passed his days and nights in weeping, and knew not what to do. One night he saw in a dream an old man, who said to him, "My son, dry thy tears; this is what thou must do. Take forty loads of honey and forty loads of milk, and manage to arrive about noon, for then the Liouvía is out hunting, and is not in her den."

PEAKS OF SHALA

000 shoulder-high rock and dashed to aid the rescue. It looked for a moment as though they would all go down upon Perolli below, but the horse got his footing and stood trembling, his head covered with streaming blankets.

I said then that I would walk, but it was not walking. It was jumping, scrambling, dropping. Those mountains were evidently created to be looked at, not to be walked upon. Bathed in perspiration, I stopped from time to time to eat a bit of snow, and twelve-year-old Rexh looked at me with compassion. He had walked nearly twenty miles that day and was still gay and fresh; the men were still singing.

788 "In a minute, Mrs. Lane, we will come to a resting place," the pitying Rexh encouraged me, and in perhaps half an hour my trembling legs brought me around a bowlder to see the two gendarmes stopped in the trail, crossing themselves. A wooden cross, blackened by storms and years, leaned forward above them, supported by a pile of stones on a small grassy knoll. Alex and Frances dropped from their ponies to lie panting beside me on the grass, while the guides, [777] smiling at our whim, stopped also. Each of them crossed himself before sitting down, for the mountain tribes have been Catholic almost ever since St. Paul preached in the Balkans, and missionary priests have put the cross at each resting place on the trails, to bring thoughts of God to weary men.

000 Below our feet the cliffs fell away, down into

1[on Chafa Bishkasit [10] Mountains -- Analyst]

PEAKS OF SHALA

though in a Paris restaurant one glass of mild wine will make me realize that a second would be unwise. I don't explain this, I simply note the fact, and it gives me a different point of view on the chronicles of hard-drinking past centuries.

We sat there talking, for an hour or more. The bishop said that he had never been out of the mountains except for a trip long ago to the Vatican in Rome; he had been there a year, and had conversed with his brother priests in Latin. Then he had come back to the mountains and had lived there ever since. His diocese included all the northern tribes, and he visited them from time to time, riding wherever a donkey could carry him, and walking where it could not. Ten years earlier he had had another foreign visitor, a Miss Durham of England; he had heard that she later wrote a book in which she told about the visit, and if he could have afforded it he would have liked to send for that book.

No, the Church had not very greatly altered the ancient customs of the people. They were all good Catholics, and attended mass. But they still buried the dead uncoffined, with three apples on the breast, and when they put a stone or a wooden slab above the grave they often carved on it, not only the cross, but also the sun. One would note, too, that at the rising and setting of the sun they made the sign of the cross to it.

He was not too intolerant of these things. After all, beyond the sun was always the good God.

PEAKS OF SHALA

ooo "To-day," I said, "we get to Scutari." For the pains in my lungs had returned and I had lain all night half waking, haunted by fever visions and voices.

"Yes, yes," said the Shala man. "I swear it! To-day we get to Scutari!" But the byraktor looked at him, saying nothing, a quizzical look in his dark eyes, and leisurely went on with his coffee making.

"Rexh," I said at five o'clock, "why don't they start?"

"I don't know, Mrs. Lane," he replied, earnestly. "They will not tell." He sat listening to every casual word, and thinking deeply. A dozen times I had suggested that we should be starting.

"Tell the byraktor we must go!" I said at six o'clock, impatient in the doorway. For a long time all the world had been a clear gray, shadowed only by the falling rain. "I pay a hundred kronen for his mule only because it gets me to Scutari to-night."

Rexh announced this firmly to the byraktor; the byraktor, listening attentively, assented with a shake of his head.

[188] At seven o'clock I walked madly up and down the small stone porch.* The byraktor's gendarme had arrived; he stood washing his face in a stone basin filled with rain water; at every splash in it he raised his head and solemnly crossed himself and made the sign of the cross toward the dawn. Inside the house, the byraktor was deep in conversation with his grandmother.

*[At house of Shoshi [260] wardhief -- Analyst]

10: Hasluck F-5 (1926-1939)1954 EGl Albania EGl

it is the staff of life is the oldest, and religious conceptions come later. As essential to life, it was suited to oath-taking; as shown by the oath 'May the bread kill me', it had power to punish perjury with death.

Two more formulae remain to be mentioned. The first was 'By my head', and the second 'By the head of my son'. The former was thought justifiable; one might do as one pleased with one's own head. But a man who swore on his son's head was strongly disapproved of; only a low fellow, it was thought, would risk his child's life by such an oath. Nothing less was involved, as appears in the following full formula for a land dispute. 'By the head of the son that I have, this land is mine. If it is not mine, may I weep for the son that I have.'[1]

When the time came to take the oath, both Catholics and Moslems behaved as if about to perform an act of worship. Catholics removed their caps and made the oath bareheaded; they also crossed themselves as they began. Sunni Moslems performed the ceremonial ablutions incumbent on them before they pray. By their preliminaries the Catholics sought to indicate respect for the Deity; by theirs the Sunnis sought also to make their oath binding —without them, so they believed, it would be null and void. The Moslems of Martanesh, being Bektashis, did not perform the ceremonial ablutions, but suspect and compurgator when taking the oath in a house had to stand facing Mecca, with the witnesses behind them. As each man's turn came, he advanced towards the Koran or loaf of bread, knelt, and laying hand on the book or bread repeated the prescribed words. This reverence for the sacred emblem was shown by both religions, sometimes with quaint little ceremonies. Thus, when the Catholics of Lurë swore in the open on the Gospel, as was their common practice, they picked up some grass or other greenery and held it over the book while they recited the oath; the purpose of the grass is not clear.[2] After the conversion of Vinjollë to Islam from Catholicism oaths were sworn indifferently, as has already been said, on the Gospel or Koran. When at a house, the sacred book was laid on fresh grass near the house or on a clean place in the farmyard. Each oath-taker kissed it three times, before venturing to put his hand on it and repeat the oath.

[1] The oath on a son's head is common to the Moslem world and if perjured involves the son as well as his father in eternal damnation.

[2] Possibly it involved the false swearer in withering like the plucked grass.

10:Hasluck F-5 (1926-1939)1954 EGl Albania EGl

695 Ordinarily the Gospel might be open or closed and the Koran bare
788 or wrapped in a cloth. A most interesting survival from Christianity comes from Fulqet, where the men, who now are all good Sunni Moslems, tapped their breasts with their fingers when making an oath; the gesture had lost the definite form of making the sign of the cross, but its origin seemed unmistakable.

695 The oath was taken in two stages. First the suspect swore in the presence of all the compurgators that he was innocent of the crime, and then the compurgators swore in the presence of witnesses that the suspect was innocent. He and they swore in the same manner. Bareheaded and making the sign of the cross if Catholic, with hands and face ritually cleansed if Moslem, each in turn invoked the Deity or laid his hand on the sacred object prescribed and repeated the oath. The compurgators did not as a rule take the oath until the suspect had done so and thereby assumed all possible responsibility before God and man for its truth. But, exceptionally, in Lumë a suspected murderer—and probably a suspected thief too—did not take the oath at all unless the compurgators, fearing that he had committed the crime, and lacking convincing proof one way or the other, wished to secure such evidence as his oath provided. In Zerqan a suspect took the oath only when the compurgators doubted his innocence.

Of the compurgators the accuser's nominees came first, headed by the suspect's nearest relatives and neighbours, the most responsible because the most knowledgeable of them all. As soon as the first two or three had taken the oath the others shed their fears of perjuring themselves and took it in their turn. Lastly came the suspect's quota, free of qualms. When the jury was large, the accuser often interrupted the proceedings before all the suspect's quota had sworn. Since his own nominees, 'good men and true', and the first of the suspect's quota had taken the oath, there could be no doubt that the remainder would do so. In Dukagjin, the Gjakovë highlands (Malësi e Jakovës), and a few other areas in that neighbourhood, only half of the compurgators ever recited the oath; the others merely put their hand on the Gospel and passed by. The first man recited the oath in full, the second touched the Gospel and passed by, and so on. According to the Franciscan priest of Theth the even numbers were there to vindicate the odd numbers, the only complete oath-takers, but Father Gjeçov describes the custom somewhat differently. He says that half the

10:Hasluck F-5 (1926-1939)1954 EGl Albania EGl

628 thrown over his head, a sign of mourning and penitence, as well as his hands tied behind his back, a sign of helplessness, remained standing near the door, while his friends sat down round the hearth. The host gave coffee to them, but not to him; his forgiveness was not yet assured, and without such assurance he could not drink his coffee. The friends pleaded with the host to untie his hands; they threatened as well as pleaded saying, 'If you like, forgive him—otherwise kill us along with him'. At length one of two things happened. The host consented to pardon the murderer, got up to throw down his collar and to untie his hands, and bade him sit down and drink coffee, saying, 'You are pardoned, friend'. More frequently, he said he could not at once pardon the man, but would give him a truce of six months, a year, or more; in sign of his mollification he probably gave him coffee, though he sent him away with his hands still tied behind his back and his collar over his head.

628 If the murderer were pardoned, a meal with meat was given in all 788 but the poorest houses—these must content themselves with coffee. On the departure of the guests a further ceremony took place. The host saw the party off as he would on any other occasion. On leaving the house he took a hammer and chipped out a little cross on the door. Each of the others in turn took the hammer and chipped out a little more, first the host's party and then the visitors. The host said, 'God send us no more grief' and 'May he be forgiven'. Each guest said, 'Honour to you for pardoning him!' After chipping out his portion each dropped the hammer on the ground for the next man to pick up; this was to make sure of not handing on the feud to him. The last man on the murderer's side threw the hammer away, repeating, 'Honour to you for pardoning him!' The cross signified that the family had had an enemy, had fired shots; the more crosses on a door, the more valiant the family. In Kurbin there are houses with ten or twelve. Since the district is now predominantly Mohammedan, the chipping of the cross is an interesting survival from the time when they were all Roman Catholic. The following day or the next the enemy paid a visit with his friends to the murderer's, and was regaled with coffee and a meal with meat; in every case the chief intermediary was an honoured guest. It may be added that modernization has attacked the ceremonies; as early as 1930 a murderer from the Saseri family of Krujë refused to have his hands tied when he went to his enemy's

10: Hasluck F-5 (1926-1939)1954 EGl Albania EGl

to be pardoned; he said it was 'disgraceful', and the plea was allowed.

The Highlanders had still another method. They called a 'St John' an infant which had not yet been sent to have its hair cut by its godfather, it being believed that St John the Baptist was Christ's godfather. When the time for peace-making seemed due, the friends brought pressure to bear to secure forgiveness. This promised, they arranged to take the murderer on a certain day to his enemy's house, his hands again tied behind his back, and take a 'St John' in its cradle with them. Ostensibly they did not bring the murderer into view; at most they kept him in the background. One of the visitors turned the cradle with the infant, who was, as always, well strapped in, upside down, saying to the host, 'Put it straight; Turn it right side up!' If he were willing, and few were not, for leaving the infant upside down might kill it and leave him with innocent blood on his hands, he turned the cradle right side up, saying, 'All right, I pardon him for the sake of God and the Saint'. Then he went and without another word untied the murderer's hands. Next he said, 'A pardon for my murder; a pardon for my father's (or brother's) murder; be it forgiven', and turned to embrace the murderer. Coffee was then served and drunk by all amid general conversation—the Highlanders are unusually lively. Having fixed a day when they would all go to eat a meal with meat at the murderer's house they took their leave. This meal at the murderer's concluded the proceedings; afterwards all went about their business; no cross was made on the enemy's door as in Kurbin.

Friends were not the only interveners. Occasionally the Turkish government took a hand, declaring on penalty of imprisonment, internment and burning out that all feuds more than seven years old were to be compounded by a money payment and not reopened. When during the 1914–18 war Austria-Hungary was in occupation of all north Albania, she also ordered blood feuds to be ended with a money payment; the resentment of Çermenikë at this attempt to force them to make peace on northern terms is still hot. Sometimes a whole community itself interfered. The procedure of west Mat was typical. When a man had been killed on either side and the feud was 'one for one', the neighbours took effective steps to prevent its continuance. They each forbade the avenger to come on his land to kill his enemy; if he did so, he would be considered a trespasser

782 elders. Even if they are persuaded to swear on the cross, they will not forego the stone, which is the symbol which gives their oath
787 validity. They are also great believers in omens, and in divination. Men versed in this skill read the future by observing the sternal bones of fowl and the scapulae of sheep. I have witnessed a performance of the latter. The bone has its special divisions, each of which has meaning. On the sheep's scapula the joint socket is the house, and its depth or shallowness indicates whether the house will be empty or full of wealth. This can be used to predict success or failure of crops. The ridge on the blade shows whether or not flocks will multiply. Small holes on the blade are cradles, and the diviner can tell how close to the family, i.e., the "house," the birth will be by the distance from the socket. When you hold the blade up to the firelight or lamp, the shape and position of the marrow will tell where and when there will be fighting. Opaque white spots mean death, and their position indicates whether they will be within or without the household of the enquirer.

782 All of these rituals are concerned with the
783 maintenance of equilibrium in Gheg society. Oaths give authority to agreements, and cannot be broken until a crisis arrives which is stronger than that which the oath-breaking will produce. By clever use of the divining bones, a knowledgeable man can evaluate the state of affairs in his neighborhood, and give warnings; he can also precipitate decisions from wavering allies, for if he is a diviner of reputation, his words will be believed. Very often what he predicts will come true.

Special ritual routines common to members of both official religions restore equilibrium after the crises of birth, marriage, and death. All of these rituals which reinforce their social habits are of much greater importance to the Ghegs than the rites of church or mosque, which are not as well adjusted to this particular form of society. Another such mechanism
671 is traditional law, codified and memorized as the Law of Lek Dukagin, which expresses the mountain attitude toward marriage and the selection of wives, and toward the blood feud. It serves to crystallize forms of behavior and inhibit change in those who are trained from childhood to believe in its infallible authority.

[see cat 116, pp. 37a-b - Amal 45t]